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Lepromatous phlebitis of the left external jugular vein

Surinder Thakur,¹ Guman Singh Negi,¹ Irappa Madabhavi,¹ Swaroop Revannasiddaiah²

¹Internal Medicine Department, Indira Gandhi Medical College, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, India;

²Radiation Therapy and Oncology Department, Regional Cancer Center, Shimla, India

Correspondence to Dr Swaroop Revannasiddaiah, swarooptheone@gmail.com

DESCRIPTION

A painless lump over the left lateral aspect of the neck was the sole presenting complaint of a 54-year-old gentleman.

On examination, the lump was cord-like, non-tender, non-pulsatile and mobile (figure 1). There were no other lumps or elsewhere in the body. Doppler ultrasonography of the



Figure 1 A mobile, non-pulsatile, non-tender lump over the left lateral aspect of the neck.

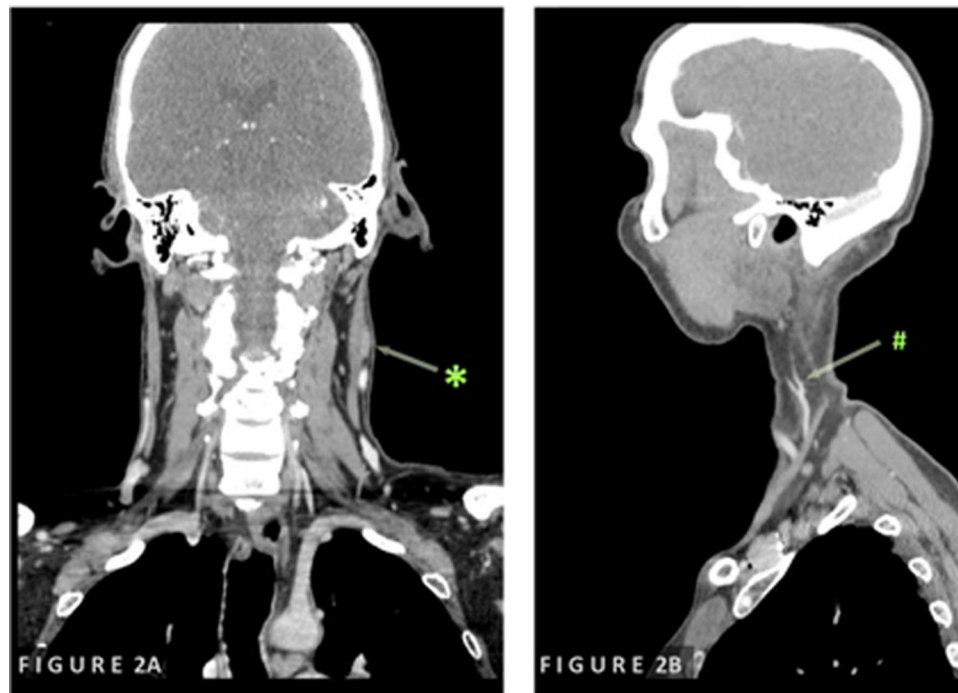


Figure 2 (A) The lesion (*) visualised on a coronal computed-tomography reconstruction. (B) An oblique-coronal plane reconstruction demonstrating absence of contrast enhancement of the left external jugular vein cranial to the level of obstruction (#).

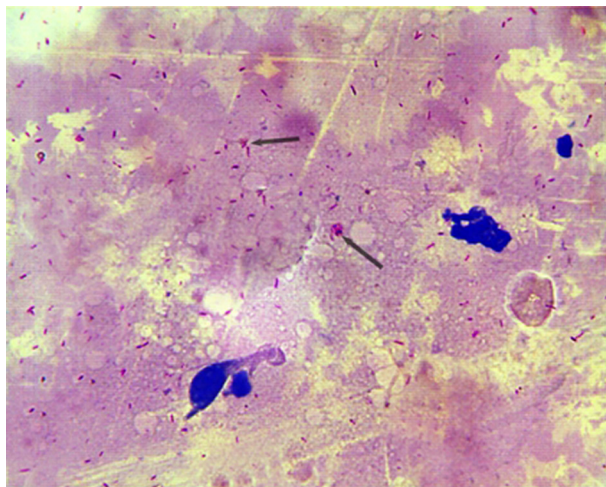


Figure 3 Zeihl-Neelsen staining of aspirate from the neck lump demonstrating numerous acid-fast bacilli, some of them arranged in globi (arrows).

neck was suggestive of left external jugular vein thrombosis. Contrast enhanced multi-detector CT imagery showed that the lump (figure 2A) was continuous inferiorly with the external jugular vein which was not patent above the level cranial to the lump (figure 2B). A fine needle aspiration cytology of the lump yielded a granulomatous

aspirate. Zeihl-Neelsen staining of the aspirate showed acid fast bacilli, some of them arranged in clusters (globi) (figure 3). A careful clinical examination on the lines of leprosy revealed patchy areas of sensory loss over the face and the radial aspect of the left forearm. Slit-skin smears from these patches also were positive for acid fast bacilli. The diagnosis was hence established as leprosy (Hansen's disease). Leprosy is a disease known for a characteristic predilection towards two particular tissues- skin and nerves. Vascular involvement is rare and when present may be a part of disseminated disease in advanced cases.¹ Lepromatous phlebitis of the external jugular vein as a presenting feature is an extremely rare occurrence, and a thorough literature search yielded only a single prior documented case.² Lepromatous involvement of blood vessels is likely to be secondary to involvement of the nervi-vasorum of the blood vessels.³

Competing interests None.

Patient consent Obtained.

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